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Sustainable development: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

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Sustainable mountain development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed 2002 the International Year of Mountains,

Recalling also its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000, 57/245 of 20 December 2002, 58/216 of 23 December 2003, 59/238 of 22 December 2004, 60/198 of 22 December 2005 and 62/196 of 19 December 2007,

Reaffirming chapter 13 of Agenda 21[1] and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[2] in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

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Noting the Bishkek Mountain Platform,[3] the outcome document of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, held in Bishkek from 28 October to 1 November 2002, which was the concluding event of the International Year of Mountains,

Noting also the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions ("Mountain Partnership"), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with benefits from the committed support of fifty countries, sixteen intergovernmental organizations and ninety-six organizations from major groups, as an important multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting further the conclusions of the global meetings of the members of the Mountain Partnership, held, respectively, in Merano, Italy, in October 2003 and in Cusco, Peru, in October 2004, and the first Andean Meeting of the Andean Initiative, held in San Miguel Tucuman, Argentina, in September 2007,

Noting the outcome of the meeting of the Adelboden Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions, which met in Rome from 1 to 3 October 2007,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development;[4]

2. *Notes with appreciation* that a growing network of Governments, organizations, major groups and individuals around the world recognize the importance of the sustainable development of mountain regions for poverty eradication, and recognizes the global importance of mountains as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater, as repositories of rich biological diversity and other natural resources, including timber and minerals, as providers of some sources of renewable energy, as popular destinations for recreation and tourism and as areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage, all of which generate positive, unaccounted economic benefits;

3. *Recognizes* that mountains are highly sensitive indicators of global climate change through phenomena such as modifications of biological diversity, the retreat of mountain glaciers and changes in seasonal runoff that is having an impact on major sources of freshwater in the world, and stresses the need to undertake actions to minimize the negative effects of these phenomena and promote adaptation measures;

4. *Also recognizes* that sustainable mountain development is a key component in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in many regions of the world;

5. *Stresses* the need for better integration of mountain issues in intergovernmental discussions on climate change, biodiversity loss and combating desertification in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Forum on Forests;

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[3] A/C.2/57/7, annex.

[4] A/64/222.

6. *Notes with concern* that there remain key challenges to achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty in mountain regions and protecting mountain ecosystems, and that populations in mountain regions are frequently among the poorest in a given country;

7. *Encourages* Governments to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches in their sustainable development strategies, and to promote integrated approaches to policies related to sustainable development in mountain regions;

8. *Also encourages* Governments to integrate mountain sustainable development in national, regional and global policymaking and development strategies, including through incorporating mountain-specific requirements in sustainable development policies or through specific mountain policies;

9. *Notes* that the growing demand for natural resources, including water, the consequences of erosion, deforestation and other forms of watershed degradation, and the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, as well as increasing out-migration, the pressures of industry, transport, tourism, mining, agriculture and the consequences of global climate change and loss of biodiversity are some of the key challenges in fragile mountain ecosystems to implementing sustainable development and eradicating poverty in mountain regions, consistent with the Millennium Development Goals;

10. *Underlines* the importance of sustainable forest management and the avoidance of deforestation, as well as the restoration of lost and degraded forest ecosystems of mountains, in order to enhance the role of mountains as natural carbon and water regulators;

11. *Notes* that sustainable agriculture in mountain regions is important for the protection of the mountain environment and the promotion of the regional economy;

12. *Recognizes* that climate change heavily impacts on sustainable agriculture in mountain regions, and calls upon Governments, the international community and other relevant stakeholders to devise and implement measures to offset its negative impacts;

13. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in mountain regions, especially those in developing countries, and urges the international community to take concrete steps to support national and regional efforts to ensure the sustainable development of mountains;

14. *Encourages* Governments, the international community and other relevant stakeholders to improve the awareness, preparedness and infrastructure to reduce risks of disasters and to cope with the increasing negative impact of disasters in mountain regions, such as flash floods, including glacial lake outburst floods, as well as landslides, debris flow and earthquakes, and, in that sense, to actively observe the theme of International Mountain Day on 11 December 2009, which is "Disaster Risk Management";

15. *Also encourages* Governments, with the collaboration of the scientific community, mountain communities and intergovernmental organizations, where

appropriate, to study, with a view to promoting sustainable mountain development, the specific concerns of mountain communities, including the effects of global climate change on mountain environments and biological diversity, in order to elaborate and subsequently implement sustainable adaptation strategies to cope with the adverse effects of climate change;

16. *Underlines* the fact that action at the national level is a key factor in achieving progress in sustainable mountain development, welcomes its steady increase in recent years with a multitude of events, activities and initiatives, and invites the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and implement strategies and programmes, including, where required, enabling policies and laws for the sustainable development of mountains, within the framework of national development plans;

17. *Encourages* the further establishment of committees or similar multi-stakeholder institutional arrangements and mechanisms at the national and regional levels, where appropriate, to enhance intersectoral coordination and collaboration for sustainable development in mountain regions;

18. *Also encourages* the increased involvement of local authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders, in particular the rural population, indigenous peoples, civil society and the private sector, in the development and implementation of programmes, land-use planning and land tenure arrangements, and activities related to sustainable development in mountains;

19. *Underlines* the need for improved access to resources, including land, for women in mountain regions as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments;

20. *Encourages*, in this regard, Governments and intergovernmental organizations to integrate the gender dimension, including, inter alia, gender disaggregated indicators, in mountain development activities, programmes and projects;

21. *Stresses* that indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge, including in the field of medicine, are to be fully considered, respected and promoted in development policy and planning in mountain regions, and underlines the importance of promoting the full participation and involvement of mountain communities in decisions that affect them and of integrating indigenous knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives;

22. *Recalls with satisfaction* the adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity of a programme of work on mountain biological diversity,[5] the overall purpose of which is the significant reduction of the loss of mountain biological diversity by 2010 at the global, regional and national levels, and its implementation, which aims at making a significant contribution to poverty eradication in mountain regions;

23. *Underscores* the need to take into account relevant articles of the Convention on Biological Diversity;[6]

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[5] UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex, decision VII/27.

[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

24. *Invites* States and other stakeholders to strengthen implementation of the programme of work on mountain biological diversity through renewed political commitment and the establishment of appropriate multi-stakeholder institutional arrangements and mechanisms, and, in this regard, notes with satisfaction the collaboration established between the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Mountain Partnership and the Mountain Forum to mobilize concerned governments and other stakeholders for more effective cooperation and to assist in building capacity for implementation of the programme of work;

25. *Recognizes* that many developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, need to be assisted in the formulation and implementation of national strategies and programmes for sustainable mountain development, through bilateral, multilateral and South-South cooperation, as well as through other forms of collaborative approaches;

26. *Invites* Member States and other relevant organizations to develop and implement mountain-related South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation programmes for the exchange of best practices, information and appropriate environmentally sound technologies;

27. *Notes* that funding for sustainable mountain development has become increasingly important, especially in view of the greater recognition of the global importance of mountains and the high level of extreme poverty, food insecurity and hardship facing mountain communities;

28. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, all relevant United Nations conventions and their funding mechanisms, within their respective mandates, and all relevant stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to consider providing support, including through voluntary financial contributions, to local, national and international programmes and projects for sustainable development in mountain regions, particularly in developing countries;

29. *Underlines* the importance for sustainable development in mountains of exploring a wide range of funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, increased opportunities for microfinance, including microcredit and microinsurance, small housing loans, savings, education and health accounts, and support for entrepreneurs seeking to develop small- and medium-sized businesses and, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis, debt for sustainable development swaps;

30. *Encourages* the further development of sustainable agricultural value chains and the improvement of mountain farmers' and agro-industry enterprises' access to and participation in markets, with the view to substantially increase the income of farmers, in particular smallholder and family farmers;

31. *Emphasizes* that mountainous regions offer diverse opportunities for tourism, and notes that consumer demand is increasingly moving towards responsible and sustainable tourism;

32. *Welcomes* the growing contribution of sustainable tourism initiatives in mountain regions as a way to enhance environmental protection and socio-economic benefits to local communities;

33. *Notes* that public awareness needs to be raised with respect to the positive and unaccounted economic benefits that mountains provide not only to

highland communities, but also to a large portion of the world's population living in lowland areas, and underlines the importance of enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems that provide essential resources and services for human well-being and economic activity and of developing innovative means of financing for their protection;

34. *Recognizes* that mountain ranges are usually shared among several countries, and, in this context, encourages transboundary cooperation approaches, where the States concerned agree to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

35. *Notes with appreciation*, in this context, that the Convention on the Protection of the Alps[7] promotes constructive new approaches to integrated, sustainable development of the Alps, including through its thematic protocols on spatial planning, mountain farming, conservation of nature and landscape, mountain forests, tourism, soil protection, energy and transport, as well as its Declaration on Population and Culture, its Action Plan on the prevention of and adaptation to climate change in the Alps and its cooperation with other Conventions on the relevant subjects;

36. *Also notes with appreciation* the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians,[8] adopted and signed by the seven countries of the region to provide a framework for cooperation and multisectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development and a forum for dialogue between all involved stakeholders;

37. *Further notes with appreciation* the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, which promotes transboundary cooperation among eight regional member countries of the Himalaya Hindu Kush region to foster action and change for overcoming mountain peoples' economic, social and physical vulnerability;

38. *Notes with appreciation* the contribution of the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions project of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the statement of the Adelboden Group in promoting specific policies, appropriate institutions and processes for mountain regions, and the positive, unaccounted economic benefits they provide;

39. *Stresses* the importance of building capacity, strengthening institutions and promoting educational programmes in order to foster sustainable mountain development at all levels and to enhance awareness of challenges to and best practices in sustainable development in mountain regions and in the nature of relationships between highland and lowland areas;

40. *Underlines* the importance of higher education in and for mountain areas, in order to expand opportunities and encourage the retention of skilled people, including youth, in mountain areas in this context recognizes recent and important initiatives at the regional level, such as the creation of three university campuses, in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, and the creation of the Himalayan University Consortium, and encourages similar efforts in other mountain regions around the world;

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[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1917, No. 32724.

[8] See www.carpathianconvention.org/text.htm.

41. *Encourages* the development and implementation of global, regional and national communication programmes to build on the awareness and momentum for change created by the International Year of Mountains in 2002 and the opportunity provided annually by International Mountain Day on 11 December;

42. *Also encourages* Member States to collect and produce information and to establish databases devoted to mountains so as to capitalize on knowledge to support interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research as well as development programmes and projects, to improve decision-making and planning and to develop long-term monitoring systems on biophysical and socio-economic impacts in order to provide a sound basis for future policy and decision-making taking into account the existing monitoring systems of the Rio Conventions;[9]

43. *Further encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to further enhance their constructive efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of the relevant chapters of Agenda 21,[1] including chapter 13, and paragraph 42 and other relevant paragraphs of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[2] taking into account the efforts of the Inter-Agency Group on Mountains and the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations;

44. *Recognizes* the efforts of the Mountain Partnership implemented in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003, invites the international community and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to consider participating actively in the Mountain Partnership to increase its value added, and invites the Partnership secretariat to report on its activities and achievements to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth session in 2010, including in regard to the thematic issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa;

45. *Notes with appreciation* in this context the efforts of the Mountain Partnership to cooperate with existing multilateral instruments relevant to mountains, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[10] the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[11] the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and mountain-related regional instruments such as the Convention on the Protection of the Alps and the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;

46. *Underscores* the need for improved strategic cooperation between the institutions and initiatives dealing with mountain development, such as the

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[9] United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and Convention on Biological Diversity.

[10] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[11] Ibid., vol. 1771, No. 30822.

Mountain Forum, the Mountain Partnership, the Mountain Research Initiative and the International Mountain Society, and takes note with appreciation of the recent efforts in mainstreaming these organizations for better coordination, cooperation and impact;

47. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution, under a sub-item, entitled "Sustainable mountain development", of the item entitled "Sustainable development".